



## **H.J.Res. 44 – Approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003**

### **Floor Situation**

H.J.Res. 44 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) on May 24, 2007. It was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, but was never considered.

H.J.Res. 44 is expected to be considered on the floor on July 23, 2007.

*Note: Similar legislation, S.J.Res. 16, was introduced in the Senate on June 14, 2007 by Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY).*

### **Summary**

H.J.Res. 44 renews the sanctions banning imports from Burma. These sanctions were contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-61).

### **Background**

The U.S. has imposed a broad array of sanctions against Burma since 1988, when the Burmese military took control of the country through a military junta. Current sanctions include a ban on all imports, a ban on the export of financial services, a freeze on certain Burmese assets, and visa restrictions on Burmese officials. U.S. sanctions against Burma are the most stringent among Western nations.

The sanctions passed by Congress in 2003 require that the ban on all imports be renewed each year by Congress. The sanctions were last renewed on August 1, 2006 by P.L. 109-251.

In the State Department's [2007 Trafficking in Persons Report](#), Burma was ranked as a Tier 3 country, which is the lowest rating a country can receive and means that the government is not making a significant effort to combat human trafficking. There are currently 16 countries included in Tier 3.

Burma also received the worst designation – Country of Particular Concern – in the State Department's [Annual Report on International Religious Freedom](#). Nations given this designation are guilty of particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

Burma continues to be the world's second largest producer of illicit opium. According to the Congressional Research Service, Burma earns between \$1 billion and \$2 billion from the export of illegal drugs, with a significant portion of this money going to Burmese military officials.

**Cost**

This bill has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

**Staff Contact**

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